

Missouri Division of Workforce Development
Skilled Workforce Initiative
One-Stop Career Center Enhancements
Competitive Funding Proposal
Program Year 2006
Guidelines

The state will make up to \$1.2 million available annually under this initiative. Five comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers will be funded annually up to \$200,000 and five affiliate centers will be funded up to \$40,000. This is a one-time funding commitment. In future years, additional one-stops will be funded to address requirements under this application.

Applications must be received by March 31, 2006 and are subject to availability of funds. The Division of Workforce Development (DWD) reserves the right to limit awards within local areas in an effort to evenly distribute funds statewide.

I. Executive Summary

Include a short description of the project, local collaboration, outcomes and leveraging of local resources including local activity funds (10% of three Title 1B formula funding streams).

II. Project Narrative

Purpose

The Missouri One-Stop Career Center system is a well-established network of employment and training services located in many communities across the state. Missouri Career Centers represent a unique partnership of employment and training organizations that reflect the specific needs in each local community. Unemployed workers, under-employed workers, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) clients, students and business and industry alike, all utilize Missouri Career Centers to meet their needs. This Request for Application: (RFA) is to facilitate the strengthening of Missouri's One Stop Career Centers to address the most critical issues and advance to the next level—a demand driven system of integrated employment and training service offerings to give Missouri a more competitive workforce.

All of Missouri's One-Stop Career Centers should be moving beyond the compliance stage and evolving into a system that provides quality services. The funding areas covered under this RFA include job seeker services, business services, unified management and planning, infrastructure and marketing. These areas were identified as potential One-Stop improvement categories from DWD's

Continuous Improvement Reviews and the *Guide to Improving One-Stops through Benchmarked Critical Success Factors* that was developed by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW). Local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) in conjunction with program partners, should assess their One-Stop system and determine how to best address the desired characteristics in this program application. The application must address all categories for comprehensive centers, describing areas that need significant resources and those that require limited attention. The application should only address necessary categories for affiliate sites (i.e. resource room services, cross-training, etc.) Please note that all of the activities under this RFA will advance the new One-Stop Chartering program that DWD will begin implementing in the near future.

Please explain the purpose of the application as it relates to this RFA.

Strategic Partnerships

Each One-Stop project should minimally include partnership/collaboration between the local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) and local entities representing mandatory One-Stop partner programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) including Title 1B programs, Wagner-Peyser, VETS, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education and Literacy, etc. (i.e. entities representing CAP, METP and PFS should also be included). Business services partnerships should include at a minimum, local colleges, economic developers, and Rapid Response staff, as well as DWD and LWIB business representatives and Veteran's representatives.

Firmly established and committed partnerships are vital to the success of a One-Stop Career Center Enhancement project. Proposals are encouraged to include other agencies that offer essential expertise and should outline the partnerships relevant to the project design. Identify all partners involved in the project and explain each partner's role. Each partner should verify its partnership in the project through a letter of commitment.

Statement of Need

Each application should describe the evolution of the One Stop Career Center system in the workforce region, including history and current status of center locations, designations, partner financial contributions, partner service offerings, referral processes and job seeker demographics (skill levels, incomes, commuting patterns, etc.). This section should also describe challenges faced with current physical design/layout and/or location, if appropriate.

The application should also include a description of the evolution and maturity of the business services function within the one-stop.

Project Design (Categories A-E)

This section includes several desired characteristics for comprehensive one-stops. Applications should address all categories for comprehensive centers, describing categories that need significant resources and those that require limited attention. Applications should only address necessary categories for affiliate sites (i.e. resource room services, cross-training, etc.)

This section should also include a timeline for the project, including milestones; short and long-term goals for the overall project.

Category A: Job Seeker Services

I. Integration – Front-line

Six new U.S. Department of Labor common performance measures are currently being tracked and reported along with the 17 WIA performance measures. The state has requested a waiver to eliminate this dual tracking effective July 1, 2006. It is envisioned that WIA Title 1B programs, labor exchange programs funded under the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Veterans' Employment and Training Services and the Trade Adjustment Assistance program will be held to the same performance standards. These integrated workforce system performance measures will make Missouri's workforce system more efficient and effective. Incongruent targets, measurement techniques, and reporting time frame discrepancies incorrectly focus Missouri Career Center staff on meeting program performance measures, rather than meeting employers' needs or on putting people to work. By refocusing the LWIBs' performance assessment from individual program performance measures to universal outcome measures, service integration can be enhanced. To further enhance integration, LWIBs should take advantage of the no-cost common measures training offered through DWD for all of the One-Stop partners' staff.

The newly designed Toolbox will be "service-focused" and will invigorate efforts toward integration. This approach will gather demographic information and assist users in identifying the "mix of services" that are most appropriate to lead the individual to success. Choices for determining program "funding buckets" will follow the service need determination and will allow excellent opportunities for Career Centers to focus on new strategies to integrate the provision of those services. LWIBs should strongly consider how the use of this new system by all Career Center partner staff will enhance integration opportunities.

Under this RFA, LWIBs are encouraged to apply for funding to design, demonstrate, implement and evaluate new service integration models that strive to manage job seeker services as a center, rather than as individual programs. Individual program goals will not be lost; they will simply fit within the overall business philosophy of the center and are shared by all. The models listed below are not intended to diminish the need for specialization, but rather to call attention to collaboration. These approaches are from CSW's guide and can be used to assist the LWIBs as they design their proposed project under this category:

- *Generalist Approach:* This approach utilizes a “generalist” staff person to follow a job seeker as they go from the resource room, to assessment, to enrollment in one or more programs, and then with follow-through. The customer has a single contact and a one-on-one relationship is developed. Advantages include a more seamless delivery from the customer's perspective, less staff burn-out, and reduced customer loss as they move from one referral point to another within the Career Center.
- *Team Approach:* This approach can take the form of a functional team or case management team. A functional team is comprised of staff from multiple Career Center partners who work on teams based on a specific services component. The most common type of team is the business services team, but there are also resource room teams, job search teams, etc. The case management team approach is patterned after medical care, where a team of experts is assembled to meet the holistic needs of the customer. Several staff of different agencies with different functions in the Career Center meet regularly to assess a customer's case.

2. Resource Room Services

Staff in the resource room should be knowledgeable on the materials available in the resource room, trained on the use of all equipment in the room, including ADA equipment, and have a thorough understanding of the programs and services offered through the Career Center. These staff should also be trained on observing any special needs customers may have and know the services available to them within the center. Resource room staff should be some of the best staff available in the center, not volunteers or program participants. Through this RFA, LWIBs can apply for funds to ensure that resource room staff receive appropriate training.

3. Re-Employment Services

In an effort to reduce the duration of unemployment compensation for profiled and four-week reporting Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, LWIBs can request funds for staffing and training development needs through this RFA. These funds would allow the LWIBs to further integrate the re-employment services that may be offered by the Career Centers, including four-week reporting.

DWD recognizes that in order for the integration of re-employment services to be successful, there will have to be technological upgrades to Toolbox for LWIB staff to access UI claimant information from DWD. DWD will work with the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to expedite this upgrade process so that it will not impede the progress of increasing the service to UI claimants.

4. Increase Universal Workshops

Career Center partner staff should identify common training/workshops and develop an efficient training delivery schedule that maximizes the staffing resources within the center. Some possible RFA funding suggestions include:

- Development of new services and workshops to attract new and different customers;
- Expansion of universal services whereby customers do not have to be enrolled; and/or
- Hiring staff to conduct universal workshops.

Category B: Business Services

The evolution of business services integration has not matured to the point where business services is a clear priority with dedicated staff time and resources from all partner programs. Ideas developed by DWD and from CSW's guide to assist LWIBs in enhancing their business services are listed below. If responding to this portion of the RFA, LWIBs should select the ideas that best suit their needs to further develop business services. Most of these initiatives are a no cost item but must be addressed in comprehensive center applications.

1. Business Marketing Teams

More fully integrate the Business Marketing Team to include representatives from local colleges, economic developers, and Rapid

Response staff, as well as DWD and WIB Business Representatives and Veteran's representatives.

2. Standardized Business Services Packet

Develop a standardized business services packet of all workforce and training services available to businesses in the region so all Career Center staff are familiar with the services, fully understand how businesses can access those services, and are able to relay the information to businesses with a clear and consistent message.

3. Benchmarks

Establish benchmarks and set goals to assist the Career Center in enhancing the quality of business services. Examples of these benchmarks can include local business market penetration rate and the number of repeat business customers beyond job orders.

4. Targeted Industries

Dedicate staff to assist those targeted industries identified in the region's Skills Gap Planning Report that was completed in 2005. These staff should familiarize themselves with that report and actively participate in future planning meetings.

5. Customer Management System

Increase the number of Career Center business services staff utilizing Toolbox and provide training, as necessary. Business data needs to be collected under one centralized tool that all partners can access.

6. Job-Shadowing

Broaden staff exposure to the business community and its needs through methods such as job-shadowing with human resources professionals, successful business services staff or local economic developers. This allows for staff development and a better understanding of the business customer.

7. Company Visits

Business services staff should visit businesses and tour facilities when possible to get a better understanding of businesses' operations and needs.

8. Ensure Credibility with Business Community

Ensure the enhancement, streamlining and credibility of business services. This can be assisted by sharing responsibilities with the business services staff among partner agencies. Only staff with experience and skills in business marketing and outreach should be dedicated to working with businesses, just as those staff with counseling experience should be dedicated to counseling. Working with businesses and being credible with businesses requires a special knowledge and unique skill sets, therefore, only those staff best qualified should be utilized for business services.

9. Single Point of Contact

Determine how business services staff will be assigned so that marketing and outreach will be most effective. Business services staff should determine the most appropriate method for their respective region to provide the best and most efficient services to businesses. Assignments may be made based on geography, industry sector, company size, etc.

10. Customer Satisfaction

Ensure customer satisfaction through a non-invasive approach to gather input from businesses. Business services staff should be able to identify what services and/or delivery mechanisms are lacking and make changes to better serve the business customer. Methods might include utilizing employer organizations already in place, such as Missouri Employer Committees, chambers of commerce, business consortiums, facilitated focus groups, and industry summits. Business customers, however, should not be inundated with an abundance of unnecessary, lengthy and duplicative surveys, meetings, and other burdensome requests.

Category C: Unified Management and Planning

This category includes ideas that can assist the LWIBs in the management and oversight of their Career Centers. This area must be addressed in comprehensive center applications.

1. One-Stop Operator Manager

The partner agencies should assign One-Stop operation duties to a single person with clear responsibilities. These responsibilities should include conducting on-site staff meetings, coordinating program services, developing referral procedures, managing common functions and common

areas, developing program evaluations and outcome reports for the boards, and managing center resources to ensure that center objectives are met.

CSW defines this One-Stop operator role as a functional manager. This person should exhibit strong leadership skills. Key functions for this position should be defined by the LWIB. The LWIB should communicate a clear vision for the Career Center, with a standing committee that works with the One-Stop operator/functional manager. According to CSW, “while a manager may have to manage across the rules of various programs, the overall function is still considered a single process. The functional manager provides day-to-day supervision of all staff that performs the function, even though formal supervision (hiring, firing, and appraisal) may be done by an agency supervisor of record. The formal supervisor confers with the functional manager in writing performance appraisals.”

In situations where One-Stop consortiums transition to the single, functional manager concept, the manager will act on behalf of the consortium and will not create another layer of bureaucracy. Through this RFA, funds could be utilized as an incentive to promote this concept, possibly to supplement the salary of one of the existing center’s program staff for increased responsibilities. DWD expects this position to be filled through existing partner staff. Please note the importance of buy-in from all partners in implementing this concept.

2. Planning

Every One-Stop Career Center should have a corporate identity, mission and goals that are exponentially greater than the sum of its individual programs. A One-Stop should be viewed as though it were a unified program with its own goals, objectives, management structure, and outcome measurement system. This synergy must be captured in an actionable One-Stop Business Plan for each comprehensive Career Center. Optimally, this plan would be developed with a process that engages all center staff and becomes the “company line” for the work of the center as a whole. All partner staff should be given an opportunity to provide input in the development and review of this plan.

In the beginning of the planning process, the Career Center needs to identify its niche market in the community and not try to become all things to all people.

DWD recommends that the following elements be included in the One-Stop Business Plan:

- Define the Business of the Career Center;
- Products and Services Available through the Career Center;
- Administration of the Career Center (Organization, Management and Finance);
- Operational Procedures of the Career Center;
- Benchmarks and Goals to Define Success for the Career Center;
- Continuous Quality Improvement Plan for the Career Center; and
- Marketing Procedures for the Career Center.

(Note: the plan under this section is not to be confused with Business Marketing Plans developed by LWIBs to enhance business services).

Once the plan is finalized, it should be distributed to all One-Stop partner staff. By getting staff involved in the plan and ensuring they each receive a copy, the Career Center will obtain employee “buy-in” to the plan.

Funds in this category could be used for meeting expenses and hiring consultants.

The RFA Application for this category should include a statement of commitment to incorporate continuous improvement processes into the operations of the One-Stop system that includes all partners and programs – not just WIA Title 1.

3. Cross-Training

Staff in successful One-Stop centers identify with the service offerings of the center as a corporate entity and are cross-trained on all mandated partner programs in the One-Stop system. Additionally, cross-trained staff can have improved morale since they are able to deliver services to clients in a more holistic team approach.

Under this RFA, LWIBs are encouraged to apply for funds to develop and deploy an aggressive cross-training solution. Meaningful cross-training is an on-going process that includes job-shadowing, applicant role-playing and temporary internships in the various program services. There is no staff person who is the single repository of knowledge for a given program or service – everyone should have a “back-up.”

Category D: Infrastructure

LWIBs can use RFA funds in this category to modify their existing facility, add furnishings and/or to purchase technological equipment and supplies. Centers that have a well-established relocation plan, but have not implemented them due

to lack of funds, could request funds under this section to assist with amortization of build-out costs of the new facility.

1. Physical Design

Many successful One-Stops across the country have put a great deal of thought and investment into the layout and furnishings of the center. Design choices greatly impact the center's image and customer perceptions and traffic flow. Internal signage can assist with customer flow by pointing out the various locations of services throughout the facility. In addition, providing a physical layout map to customers gives them an overall view of the center's operation and helps the customers navigate through the center.

A good Career Center does not need a waiting area because all customers are busy with constructive activity. That is, customers filling out forms would be sitting at tables in the resource room or an area/room out of the flow of traffic. By doing this, long lines can be avoided, which can cause customers to turn away from the Career Center. Also, an open, inviting, and professional Career Center begins satisfying customers the minute they walk through the door.

The resource room should be one of the first things the customer sees when entering the center and is large enough to easily accommodate customers during peak periods. This room should be the focal point of the Career Center and look professional with comfortable furnishings and plenty of computers for customers to use.

Many Missouri Career Centers still have the look and feel of their predecessors from years gone by—unemployment offices. Under this RFA, LWIBs should apply for funds to create a more comfortable, inviting environment. Possible funding ideas might include:

- Internal Signage - Signage that can assist customers in clearly understanding what services are offered at the various locations within the center.
- Children's Area - A safe area with activity centers for children.
- Orientation Room - Space dedicated for viewing Career Center orientation videos.
- Resource Room – Tables, workstations, display racks, books, materials, and other furnishings that would be used by clients in this room.
- Business Resource Center - Space dedicated for use by local business customers. Ideally, this center would have a separate outside entrance. The Business Resource Center should be

adequately equipped to allow for interviewing, business meetings, and employee training. The center should also have reference materials available for businesses to use, as well as telephones, fax machine, computer, printer, copy machine and audio-visual equipment.

- Universal Workshop Room – Dedicated room for universal workshops.
- Furniture - Comfortable and appropriate furniture to make the center more inviting. (NOTE: Furniture purchased through this RFA must not be permanently attached to the facility.)

Proposed renovations to facilities that are owned or leased by the State of Missouri must be approved by the Division of Workforce Development, and coordinated with the Office of Administration, Division of Facilities Management, Design and Construction to design and see the project through to completion.

2. Technology

Although funding for technology is limited, DWD recognizes the importance it has on improving services at the Career Centers. Projects in this category will be evaluated on how well the LWIBs are able to justify their needs for technological equipment. All DWD discretionary resources will be committed to funding RFA projects. Therefore, if resource room computers need to be upgraded or replaced in a center, this will be the only opportunity to purchase new computers this year with funds from DWD. Funding could be used for the following:

- Computers, servers, routers
- In-focus machines
- Audio-visual equipment
- Telephone system upgrades
- Opinion meters (to measure customer satisfaction as a unified activity)
- Career Center orientation video
- On-line resource manual

Category E: Marketing

Successful One-Stops have a clear brand identity that the public knows and associates with quality. In Missouri, the “Career Center” name is shared by Vocational and Technical Career Centers, which leads to confusion and a lack of true identify for the public workforce system. In addition, the system perpetuates confusion on its own by the continued use

of an array of names other than “Missouri Career Center” (including Division of Workforce Development) on doors and signs.

The strongest brands are found in states in which a common statewide brand is used that was developed by and embraced by both state and local One-Stop partner leaders.

When Version II of GreatHires.org is ready for deployment, DWD will spend significant resources marketing an on-line Career Center that is competitive with Monster.com and Career Builder, as opposed to the electronic job bank that is currently being used. With the limited resources available to the public workforce system, it would be irresponsible to market this system independently from the physical location where services are offered. The competitive advantages GreatHires.org will have over the competition need to be made known to customers. Such advantages include career counselors that can assist job seekers in accessing skill improvement services; business representatives that can conveniently assist businesses locate skilled workers; Certified Workforce Development Specialists that have met the standards of workforce professionals; friendly, professional staff that can provide guidance and information over the phone; and the other resources found in Career Centers that add significant value to the on-line system. Furthermore, it is a good business practice to unify the brand name of the on-line store in the same fashion as the physical location. Private industry has many examples of companies that use a single brand for their websites and physical facilities (i.e., Best Buy, Home Depot, etc.).

Under this RFA, LWIBs are encouraged to seek funding to promote the co-branding of GreatHires.org into their marketing campaigns. Allowable materials include Missouri Career Center staff “logo wear” clothing, business cards, brochures, and signage, as well as promotional items. Also, LWIBs are encouraged to indicate how they will cooperate with the Statewide Marketing Taskforce to implement marketing strategies that are complemented by statewide and other regional marketing programs. Such participation also allows local areas to have input into statewide marketing programs.

Performance Outcomes

- Increased market penetration so that the One-Stop system is the primary resource in every community where businesses and job seekers turn for workforce development services (*i.e. increase # of repeat customers, increase # of new customers*).
- Services provided are market-driven and increase the value added to economic development (*increase # of registered job seekers that obtain employment in targeted industries as a result of service offering, increase # of clients*

obtaining wage increases in targeted industries as a result of service offering; increase in employer customer satisfaction.)

- Services are integrated at the front-line level and managed in a unified way at the supervisory level (*increase # of co-enrollments; increase # of cross-trained staff; evidence of team and/or generalist approach at front-line levels; evidence of single one-stop operator at supervisory level; utilization of redesigned Toolbox to reduced customer handoffs—integrated intake, assessment, eligibility determination, follow-up, referral process across programs*).
- Increased system capacity through well-trained staff and expanded universal services, including re-employment services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants to reduce the time spent collecting UI compensation (*# of UI clients who enter employment as a result of new service, # of UI clients who reduce duration as a result new service, increase # of clients attending universal workshops*).
- Improved physical design and technology that supports the vision and philosophy of the One-Stop center system (*cite specific improvements in productivity as a result of physical design and technology investments; increase in customer satisfaction*).

Staffing Qualifications

Where applicable please include job descriptions and resumes of key personal as prescribed.

IV. Budget

The RFA budget submission guidelines prescribed are to be followed.

V. Project Reporting

The RFA project reporting guidelines prescribed are to be followed.

VI. Evaluation and Scoring

Proposals will be evaluated by an interagency team. Scoring criteria will be based on the following critical program elements:

40% Project Design and Innovation

(How well the application includes the required/suggested elements of project design).

25% Strategic Partnerships

(Firmly committed partnerships are vital to the success of career center operations. How well the application addresses the strategic partnerships of the project).

20% Performance/Outcomes

(The quality of the specific measurable performance outcomes the One Stop project plans to achieve).

15% Budget and Financial Accuracy

(Each application should include a line item budget including a breakout of specific training costs and a description of other funds utilized in this project. Priority will be given to those applications leveraging other funding and in-kind contributions.)

VII. Reservation Clauses

The RFA reservation clauses prescribed are to be followed.

VIII. Procurement

The RFA procurement guidelines prescribed are to be followed.

Proposals should be submitted to the attention of Roderick Nunn, Division of Workforce Development, 421 East Dunklin, P.O. Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102

E-mail: roderick.nunn@ded.mo.gov Fax: 573-522-9496.

Questions regarding this proposal should be submitted to Mark Bauer, Division of Workforce Development, 421 East Dunklin, P.O. Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102

E-mail: mark.bauer@ded.mo.gov or by phone at 573-526-8256.